

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

a1 Claim 1. (Original) A method for providing a precured innerliner (50) for a pneumatic tire assembly (94), said pneumatic tire assembly being built on an associated tire building drum (48) and subsequently mounted into an associated shaping and vulcanizing mold (90), the method including the steps of providing calendaring means (10) for forming a continuous strip of elastomeric material and curing means (38) for curing said continuous strip, said calendaring means being able to form said continuous strip of elastomeric material having a predetermined cross sectional profile, the method characterized by the steps of:

utilizing said calendaring means to provide said continuous strip (12) of elastomeric material having a cross-sectional profile (66) including a center region (70) bounded by first and second lateral regions (72,74), said center region having a maximum thickness T_1 at least twice a minimum thickness T_2 of said first lateral region;

utilizing said curing means to cure a predetermined portion of said continuous strip of elastomeric material, said predetermined portion having a length equal to or greater than a circumference of said associated tire building drum;

winding said predetermined portion onto said associated tire building drum after said step of utilizing said curing means;

cutting said predetermined portion to provide splice surfaces (58,60) after said step of utilizing said curing means; and,

forming said innerliner (50) by joining said splice surfaces.

Claim 2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said curing means is a press (40), comprising a press platen (80) having a pressing surface (82) mating with a profiled surface (62) of said continuous strip (12), the method further characterized by:

providing a press platen (42) having a pressing surface (44) mating with said cross-sectional profile engaging said press platen with said predetermined portion of said continuous strip to preserve said cross-sectional profile during said step of utilizing said curing means.

Claim 3. (Original) The method of claim 1 further characterized by the step of:
winding said predetermined portion onto a holding roll before said step of
winding said predetermined portion onto said associated tire building drum.

Claim 4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said splice surfaces have a splice angle of
at least 80°.

a Claim 5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said splice surfaces are joined with an
adhesive.

Claim 6. (Original) A precured innerliner (50) for a tire assembly for use in an associated
bladder-less shaping and vulcanizing mold (90), the innerliner characterized by:
a cross-sectional profile (66) having a center region (70) bounded by first and
second lateral regions (72,74), said center region having a thickness at least twice a
thickness of said first lateral region.

Claim 7. (Original) The precured innerliner of claim 6 further characterized by:
a splice having an associated splice angle of at least 80°.

Claim 8. (Original) A precured innerliner (50) for a tire assembly (94) for use in an associated
bladder-less shaping and vulcanizing mold (90), the innerliner being formed by a process
including the steps of providing calendaring means (10) for forming a continuous strip of
elastomeric material and curing means (38) for curing said continuous strip, said calendaring
means being able to form said continuous strip of elastomeric material having a predetermined
cross sectional profile, the process characterized by the steps of:

utilizing said calendaring means to provide said continuous strip (12) of elastomeric
material having a cross-sectional profile (66) including a center region (70) bounded by
first and second lateral regions (72,74), said center region having a maximum thickness
 T_1 at least twice a minimum thickness T_2 of said first lateral region;

utilizing said curing means to cure a predetermined portion of said continuous strip of elastomeric material, said predetermined portion having a length equal to or greater than a circumference of said associated tire building drum;

winding said predetermined portion onto said associated tire building drum after said step of utilizing said curing means;

cutting said predetermined portion to provide splice surfaces (58,60) after said step of utilizing said curing means; and,

forming said innerliner (50) by joining said splice surfaces.

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Claim 9. (Cancelled)

Claim 10. (New) A method for providing a precured innerliner (50) for a pneumatic tire assembly (94), said pneumatic tire assembly being built on an associated tire building drum (48) and subsequently mounted into an associated shaping and vulcanizing mold (90), the method including providing calendaring means (10) for forming a continuous strip of elastomeric material having a predetermined cross-sectional profile, the method comprising the steps of:

utilizing said calendaring means to provide said continuous strip (12) of elastomeric material having a profiled surface (62) and a cross-sectional profile (66) including a center region (70) bounded by first and second lateral regions (72,74), said center region having a thickness T_1 greater than a thickness T_2 of said first lateral region;

providing a press with a pressing surface (82) which mates with said profiled surface; and,

utilizing said press to in-line cure a predetermined portion of said continuous strip of elastomeric material and preserve said cross-sectional profile by engaging said pressing surface with said predetermined portion, said predetermined portion having a length equal to or greater than a circumference of said associated tire building drum.
